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General Assembly

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Sixty-third session
Agenda item 113
Multilingualism

Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Burundi, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Niger, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sudan, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo and Tunisia: draft resolution

Multilingualism

The General Assembly,

Recognizing that the United Nations pursues multilingualism as a means of promoting, protecting and preserving diversity of languages and cultures globally,

Recognizing also that genuine multilingualism promotes unity in diversity and international understanding, and recognizing the importance of the capacity to communicate to the peoples of the world in their own languages, including in formats accessible to persons with disabilities,

Stressing the need for strict observance of the resolutions and rules establishing language arrangements for the different bodies and organs of the United Nations,

Emphasizing the importance of multilingualism in the activities of the United Nations, including those linked to public relations and information,

Recalling its resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992, by which it adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[1] in particular article 27 thereof, concerning the rights of persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities,

Recalling also its resolutions 2 (I) of 1 February 1946, 2480 B (XXIII) of 21 December 1968, 42/207 C of 11 December 1987, 50/11 of 2 November 1995, 52/23 of 25 November 1997, 54/64 of 6 December 1999, 56/262 of 15 February 2002, 59/309 of 22 June 2005, 61/244 of 22 December 2006, 61/266 of 16 May

[1] See resolution 2200 (XXI), annex.

Please recycle

2007, 63/100 B of 5 December 2008, 63/248 of 24 December 2008 and 63/280 of 8 May 2009,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General[2] and the note by which the Secretary-General transmitted the final report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the impact of its activities during the International Year of Languages (2008);[3]

2. *Also takes note* of the appointment of a new coordinator for multilingualism, and calls upon the Secretary-General to continue to develop the informal network of focal points in order to support the coordinator;

3. *Emphasizes* the paramount importance of the equality of the six official languages of the United Nations;

4. *Underlines* the need for full implementation of the resolutions establishing language arrangements for the official languages of the United Nations and the working languages of the Secretariat;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that all language services are given equal treatment and are provided with equally favourable working conditions and resources, with a view to achieving maximum quality of those services, with full respect for the specificities of the six official languages and taking into account their respective workloads;

6. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to complete the task of uploading all important older United Nations documents onto the United Nations website in all six official languages on a priority basis, so that those archives are also available to Member States through that medium;

7. *Reiterates* that all content-providing offices in the Secretariat should continue their efforts to translate into all official languages all English-language materials and databases posted on the United Nations website in the most practical, efficient and cost-effective manner;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to ensure, through the provision of documentation services and meeting and publishing services under conference management, including high-quality translation and interpretation, effective multilingual communication among representatives of Member States in intergovernmental organs and members of expert bodies of the United Nations equally in all the official languages of the United Nations;

9. *Stresses* the importance of providing United Nations information, technical assistance and training materials, whenever possible, in the local languages of the beneficiary countries;

10. *Recalls* its resolution 63/248, in which it reaffirmed the provisions relating to conference services in its resolutions on multilingualism;

11. *Acknowledges* the measures undertaken by the Secretary-General, in accordance with its resolutions, to address the issue of the replacement of retiring staff in the language services, and requests the Secretary-General to maintain and intensify those efforts, including the strengthening of cooperation with institutions

[2] A/63/338.

[3] A/63/752.

that train language specialists to meet the need in the six official languages of the United Nations;

12. *Notes with satisfaction* the willingness of the Secretariat to encourage staff members, in meetings with interpretation services, to use any of the six official languages of which they have a command;

13. *Reiterates with concern its request* to the Secretary-General to ensure that the rules concerning the simultaneous distribution of documents in all six official languages are strictly respected as regards both the distribution of printed copies and the posting of parliamentary documentation on the Official Document System and the United Nations website, in keeping with section III, paragraph 5, of its resolution 55/222 of 23 December 2000;

14. *Emphasizes* the importance of:

(a) Making appropriate use of all the official languages of the United Nations in all the activities of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, with the aim of eliminating the disparity between the use of English and that the use of the five other official languages;

(b) Ensuring the full and equitable treatment of all the official languages of the United Nations in all the activities of the Department of Public Information;

and, in this regard, reaffirms its request to the Secretary-General to ensure that the Department has appropriate staffing capacity in all the official languages of the United Nations to undertake all its activities;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to ensure that, in accordance with their income-generating nature, guided tours at United Nations Headquarters are consistently available, in particular in all the six official languages of the United Nations;

16. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to develop and maintain multilingual United Nations websites, from within existing resources, including efforts to endeavour to keep the Secretary-General's web page up to date in all the official languages of the Organization;

17. *Reaffirms* the need to achieve full parity among the six official languages on the United Nations website;

18. *Also reaffirms* that the United Nations website is an essential tool for the Member States, the media, educational institutions, the general public and non-governmental organizations, and reiterates the continued need for efforts by the Department of Public Information to maintain and improve it;

19. *Further reaffirms* its request to the Secretary-General to ensure, while maintaining an up-to-date and accurate website, the adequate distribution of financial and human resources within the Department of Public Information allocated to the United Nations website among all official languages, taking into consideration the specificity of each official language, on a continuous basis;

20. *Notes with concern* that the multilingual development and enrichment of the United Nations website in several official languages has improved at a much slower rate than expected, and in this regard requests the Department of Public Information, in coordination with content-providing offices, to improve the actions

taken to achieve parity among the six official languages on the United Nations website, in particular by expediting the filling of current vacant posts in some sections;

21. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, in cooperation with the Office of Information and Communications Technology of the Department of Management of the Secretariat, to continue its efforts to ensure that technological infrastructures and supportive applications fully support Latin, non-Latin and bidirectional scripts in order to enhance the equality of all official languages on the United Nations website;

22. *Welcomes* the cooperative arrangements undertaken by the Department of Public Information with academic institutions in order to increase the number of web pages available in some official language, and requests the Secretary-General, in coordination with content-providing offices, to extend, in a cost-effective manner, these cooperative arrangements to all official languages of the United Nations, bearing in mind the necessity of adherence to United Nations standards and guidelines;

23. *Notes with satisfaction* the official launch of iSeek in Geneva in the two working languages of the Secretariat, and encourages the Secretariat to continue its efforts to implement iSeek at all duty stations as well as to develop and implement cost-neutral measures to provide Member States with secure access to the information currently accessible only on the Intranet of the Secretariat;

24. *Notes with appreciation* the work carried out by the United Nations information centres, including the United Nations Regional Information Centre, in favour of the publication of United Nations information materials and the translation of important documents into languages other than the official languages of the United Nations, with a view to reaching the widest possible audience and extending the United Nations message to all corners of the world in order to strengthen international support for the activities of the Organization, and encourages United Nations information centres to continue their multilingual activities in the interactive and proactive aspects of their work, especially by arranging seminars and debates to further the spread of information and the understanding and exchange of views regarding United Nations activities at the local level;

25. *Recalls* its resolution 61/244, in which it reaffirmed the need to respect the equality of the two working languages of the Secretariat, reaffirmed the use of additional working languages in specific duty stations as mandated and in that regard requested the Secretary-General to ensure that vacancy announcements specified the need for either of the working languages of the Secretariat, unless the functions of the post required a specific working language;

26. *Also recalls* paragraph 17 of section II of its resolution 61/244, in which it acknowledged that the interaction of the United Nations with the local population in the field was essential and that language skills constituted an important element of the selection and training processes, and therefore affirmed that a good command of the official language(s) spoken in the country of residence should be taken into account as an additional asset during those processes;

27. *Takes note* of chapter E, section 2, of the report of the Secretary-General,[1] requests the Secretary-General to continue his ongoing efforts in this

regard, and further recalls its resolution 63/280 without prejudice to Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations;

28. *Stresses* that the employment of staff shall continue to be carried out in strict accordance with Article 101 of the Charter and in line with the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolutions;

29. *Also stresses* that the promotion of staff in the Professional and higher categories should be carried out in strict accordance with Article 101 of the Charter and in line with the provisions of resolution 2480 B (XXIII) and the relevant provisions of resolution 55/258 of 14 June 2001;

30. *Encourages* United Nations staff members to continue actively to use existing training facilities to acquire and enhance their proficiency in one or more of the official languages of the United Nations;

31. *Recalls* that linguistic diversity is an important element of cultural diversity, and takes note of the entry into force, on 18 March 2007, of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;

32. *Also recalls* paragraph 25 (a) of its resolution 61/266, and welcomes the activities of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Member States, the United Nations system and all the other participating bodies aiming at fostering respect for and the promotion and protection of all languages, in particular endangered ones, linguistic diversity and multilingualism;

33. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session a comprehensive report on the full implementation of its resolutions on multilingualism;

34. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-fifth session the item entitled "Multilingualism".

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4 September 2009

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Sixty-third session
Agenda item 113
Multilingualism

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* Reissued for technical reasons.

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2. *Also takes note* of the appointment of a new coordinator for multilingualism, and calls upon the Secretary-General to continue to develop the informal network of focal points in order to support the coordinator;

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9. *Stresses* the importance of providing United Nations information, technical assistance and training materials, whenever possible, in the local languages of the beneficiary countries;

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